



NEWS RELEASE

Office of the
United States Attorney
for the
District of Nebraska
Joe W. Stecher

1620 Dodge Street Suite 1400 Omaha NE 68102-1506 (402) 661-3700

July 7, 2009

United States Attorney Joe Stecher and the United States Secret Service announce the following information for the attention of the media:

Event Triggering this Release:

On July 6, 2009, Mark A. Mehner, age 48 of Elkhorn, entered a plea of guilty to wire fraud. As part of his plea of guilty, Mehner will be required to serve a three-year-term of imprisonment to be followed by an additional term of supervised release. The Honorable Lyle E. Strom accepted the plea of guilty and scheduled sentencing for September 25, 2009.

Mehner defrauded Zion Lutheran Church out of approximately \$290,000.00. Mehner was the congregation's president in 2004 when he told the church leadership that an anonymous member of the congregation had approached him offering to donate land valued at 1.2 to 2 million dollars. In return, Mehner said the donor wanted to be reimbursed for the original cost of the land, purportedly 250,000.00. The church authorized Mehner to work on their behalf. The church obtained a loan for \$250,000.00. The proceeds were given to Mehner and deposited into a trust account he had opened the day before. Additional monies were forwarded to Mehner for closing costs and other fees which, along with accrued interest, brought the church's financial contribution up to approximately \$290,000.00. Mehner converted the loan and additional funds to his personal use. There was no transfer of real estate, no closing, and no anonymous member of the congregation that had approached Mehner offering to donate land.

Name of Defendant: Mark A. Mehner

AKA:

Age: 48

City of residence: Elkhorn, Nebraska

Crime(s) Charged and Potential Penalty (A CHARGE is merely an accusation and every defendant is presumed innocent until and unless proven guilty): Wire Fraud, up to 30 years of imprisonment, up to a \$1,000,000 fine, or both imprisonment and fine, up to 5 years of supervised release and a \$100 special assessment.

Specific Location of Alleged Crime: Omaha, Nebraska

Location of Arrest: Omaha, Nebraska

Alleged Dollar Loss/Type and Quantity of Drug:

Others Charged in Same Scheme:

Relevant Dates:

Date of Alleged Crime: On or about September 27, 2004

Federal Arrest Date: February 26, 2007

Date Complaint Issued:

Indictment Returned Date: February 22, 2007

Initial Appearance Date: February 27, 2007

Plea or Trial and Date(s): July 6, 2009

Sentencing Date: September 25, 2009

Next Court Hearing Type and Date: September 25, 2009, Sentencing

Assigned Magistrate Judge: The Honorable F. A. Gossett, III

Held without Bond, or Released from Custody: Released on bond

In Continuous Custody Since:

Assigned District Court Judge: The Honorable Lyle E. Strom

Initials of Assigned AUSA/Preparer of THIS Release: MPN